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ABSTRACT

A historical overview of the teaching of moral conduct in schools forms the first part of this paper. The authors cite several precedents for education focused on producing high moral conduct and describe the recent slackening of concern for moral education in our public schools. In the second part of the paper, the authors discuss the steps taken in the Salt Lake City (Utah) school district to stimulate moral conduct in students. The steps involved articulating moral principles, which were then adopted as a code of ethics for the district faculty, analyzing and reshaping the curriculum to facilitate moral learning, and planning appropriate in-school activities for students. After two years of implementation, the authors feel the program has been successful among both students and faculy, although they remain frustrated with the level of pupil commitment in the high schools. (Author/WD)

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EDUCATION AND MORAL CONDUCT: RE-DISCOVERING AMERICA

M. Donald Thomas and Rafael Lewy

Education focussed on producing moral conduct is not new to American public schools. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 states: "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." And equivalent character-oriented themes were reiterated throughout our earlier history. For instance, Thomas Jefferson, in a Virginia State document prepared in 1818, described the goals of elementary education as follows:

"To give each citizen the information he needs for the transaction of his own business;

To enable him to calculate for himself, and to express and preserve his ideas, his contracts and accounts, in writing;

To improve, by reading, his morals and his faculties;

To understand his duties to his neighbors and himself, and to express and to discharge with competence the functions confided to him by either."

Obviously, our country has had a long term commitment to teaching moral conduct. Today, however, it is not so clear that moral education is fashionable in our schools.

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It may seem that, in our desire to provide everybody with their "fair share"--and we may call this aim social justice --we have neglected to teach the responsibility of giving, as well as receiving.

In contradiction to these patterns of ignoring moral conduct, the Salt Lake City public schools since 1974 have been developing and carrying on a program to encourage moral conduct among our students. Our district is perhaps medium sized (with 23,000 pupils), but our experience may be of use to others. In fact, some of the policies developed by our efforts may be applied in individual schools, or even subschools, as well as in whole districts. Later in this paper, we will describe this program in some detail. But, to preface this description, let us first survey some of the alternative approaches towards moral education now being considered and tried. This survey will give readers background to apply in understanding the perspective underlying our efforts. Such background is especially relevant in considering the field of moral education.

The fact is that the evaluation of school activities to improve students' moral activities is complex. It is ~~time~~ true that some outcomes of these programs are easily measured. But these outcomes are often rather trivial. For instance, we may evaluate whether students' attitudes towards what is

right and wrong--as measured by pencil-and-paper tests--have changed. However, other research has demonstrated that such attitude changes are often unrelated to significant changes in persisting conduct. Efforts to evaluate persisting changes in student conduct are technically possible; unfortunately, they are complex and costly to carry out. Thus, serious programs to improve student moral conduct often have to be guided ~~for a lengthy period~~ by in tuition, experience, and some consequential theory about morality and human conduct. And, after all, our forefathers--Jefferson and his contemporaries--seem to have been able to conduct relatively effective programs to foster moral conduct without the resources of modern evaluation; indeed, they may have even benefitted from their concern for realistic general principles as compared with focussing on refined academic niceities.

Our Ambivalence Towards Morality

As most readers realize, there is much controversy now surrounding the area of moral education. These controversies have sometimes been related to the concept of situational ethics. Now, exactly what term means may be open to debate. But its connotations--if not its precise definition--are evident. Those connotations suggest that what is morally right or wrong in any particular situation is

dependent on many subtle and complex variables. In some ultimate sense, this proposition may be true. However, the proposition is not much help to students, or to teachers and others concerned with communicating moral values to students. Putting it simply, it is just common sense to realize that, when human beings are confronted with temptations, we are all too willing to find plausible excuses to excuse our yielding. And, of course, this tendency to look for "outs" is especially intense for persons facing novel temptations. Thus, young people, in particular, need to be provided with clear-cut rules for dealing with the stresses of temptation. Communicating a grey or blurred values will not be too helpful to them.

To offer a concrete instance, Jeb Stuart Magruder, one of President Nixon's bright, ambitious young men, testified before the Senate Watergate Committee that he had justified (to himself) his unlawful acts to assist the re-election of Nixon in terms of the situational ethics he had learned at Yale. Now, it is undoubtedly unfair to Yale to say that Magruder would have acted differently if he had not been exposed to situational ethics. However, there is one judgement about Magruder's education we can make with some assurance. During the era of his education, it is quite likely that he could have procceded through school and

college without ever having been exposed to a strong dose of something like the Ten Commandments, or another vital, direct moral code, that said, "Don't do wrong things, even if it is expedient, or seems to get you out of trouble. Furthermore, remember, if you are tempted, and you will be, that wrongdoers always find excuses. The safest rule, when faced with moral challenges, is to do nothing in private that you would not do in public."

Pluralistic ethics, which is one way to characterize our recent trends, invites citizens--and students--to jump from one moral theory to another. Such patterns, in many ways, are antithetical to the continuation of any organized society; a society assumes the persistence of some unquestioned common values. Pluralism in ethical behavior leads to the evasion of personal obligations to do the right things. Under such a system, there is no code of shared assumptions adhered to by all. Thus, common purposes cannot be achieved, and simple, direct statements of moral purpose are seen as trivial.

Undoubtedly, two of the great strengths of our nation are the diversity of the ethnic backgrounds of our people and our exultation of individual worth. However, these strengths can be weakened through extreme pluralism and egocentrism, which can legitimize every individual act,

regardless of its moral base. We must be able to appreciate diversity and individual vitality, but simultaneously maintain criteria which make individuals morally accountable for their acts.

To put it simply, we must re-establish a very ancient moral tradition. Individual ethical responsibility for one's actions is a private, personal matter. Humans who are not slaves, prisoners, or dependent children are capable ~~for one's actions~~ of selecting what they choose to do. Or, if they do not act, that, too, is their free decision. Adults cannot blame society, their parents, or their "station in life" for their individual acts. Each person must be responsible for what he does or does not do. As Emerson said, "If you wish not to be known for something, then you should not do it."

Reviving Moral Concerns

In the early days of our country, moral education was a major part of the school experience. Ethical principles were extracted from the Bible, Poor Richard's Almanac, and the basic documents of our nation. Thus, Jefferson urged that high schools stimulate students to "develop their reasoning faculties, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, and instill into them the precepts of virtue and

order." As for elementary school students, he proposed that they become acquainted with "Grecian, Roman, English and American history," so they would be adequately informed for participation in community life.

Another typical instance of such morality-oriented concerns can be drawn from the activities of Horace Mann, generally regarded at the founder of the American common school. When Mann was Secretary to the Massachusetts State Board of Education, during the early nineteenth century, his biographer Messerli observed that,

> "He sought out the most distinguished authors of the day for his district school library series, including Washington Irving, George Bancroft, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Richard Henry Dana, Jr. However, he considered fiction dangerous unless it was carefully edited and its prose studied with moral teachings. Mann conceded to Elizabeth Peabody that her young friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne, had written Twice-Told Tales 'beautifully,' but for schools, he needed 'somthing nearer to duty and business.'"

In passing, it should also be noted that, appropos of religious beliefs, Mann was probably an agnostic, and Jefferson, at best, a diest. Thus, their values had a semi-secular basis. Despite this perspective, they were

unqualifiedly committed to imbuing the young with morality and patriotism, in part through the processes of education. And, conversely, they had no assumption that the young would "naturally" grow up possessing correct moral values, without active and purposeful intervention by adult-managed institutions.

Our readers must recognize that, in the recent and intermediate past, we have seen a significant slackening of concern for moral education in our public schools. However, at this moment, it seems that this distressing trend is moderating, and we are seeing some hopeful changes. For example:

- Almost every state in the nation is taking a new look at citizenship education, including moral education.
- Major private foundations are supporting curriculum development in ethics education.
- Ethics education has captured the interest of the American Bar Association, the National Institute for Education, colleges and universities, and hundreds of school districts.
- Major education associations have expressed a strong new interest in ethics and citizenship education.

- The works of researches in moral development are rapidly finding their way into teacher education courses, workshops and educational conferences.
- There is strong public support for educating our youth to be good citizens.

Teaching Personalized Morality

These changes are encouraging. But they do not mean the problem is resolved. And we should not be surprised if people have different opinions about how to inculcate morality in the young and what should be inculcated--for this is surely one of the most profound problems in human history. Thus, if schools are to play a larger role in education for values, one must ask if values can be taught at all. An influential work by Raths and others (Values and Teaching) claims that values cannot be defined; we only know that they are important to human existence. The book assumes that a child's values already exist, perhaps in a dormant stage, when he enters school. The process of transformation from passive to active awareness is called "values clarification." The objective of values clarification is to help individuals develop their own moral principles. Values, therefore, are personal. Their educational worth is determined by the student who, through rational explorations into the depth of his soul makes ethical

judgements. Any absolutist imposition of externally defined values on the student is difficult, not only because of the lack of internalization, which is inherent in every external method, but because of the difference of individual perceptions. As a result, values clarification theoretically invites every student to invent his own moral criteria. However, there are some strings attached. Raths agrees that there is not a complete freedom of moral choice. There are certain social taboos which become a form of public policy. These taboos should not be attacked. They are the fabric of the social order. The values clarifiers --if one may be ironic--are not too clear as to when taboos should be protected, and when they should be ignored, as unwarranted restrictions on personal development. If moral ambiguity is frustrating for adult, college-trained teachers, one may wonder what confusion it generates for elementary and high school students.

Another popular answer to the problem of providing moral education is Lawrence Kohlberg's Cognitive-Developmental Approach. It, too, applies a relativistic perspective. Referring to numerous comprehensive longitudinal studies, Kohlberg proposes that moral development may be related to the stages of human physical and intellectual growth. He contends that the moral growth of an individual progresses

gradually from outer-directedness to inner-directedness. The responsibility of education, with respect to fostering morality, is to assist students to develop towards inner-directedness. Kohlberg envisages this responsibility as a form of midwifery, in which the values already latent in the student are encouraged to emerge, just as we facilitate a child's physical development through nurturing and protecting it. Kohlberg, like Raths, is reluctant to define any moral absolutes which should structure this process of nurturance, or constrain the child's personal value development. His only explicit value commitment is to "justice," but this is not much help in guiding teachers--everybody is in favor of justice and everybody gives the term different meanings in concrete situations. For example, both Plato and John Rawls wrote whole books on that topic--neither of which most teachers are likely to read--and both of which are in frequent disagreement.

A Cynical Look at Value Free Education

Kohlberg deserves credit for trying to put his proposals into actual practice. He and his associates have attempted to create a "moral society" in a Cambridge, Massachusetts high school. The available reports suggest the school is not a great success (see the references in the footnote). Indeed, a friend of the author's, in a conversation with

Kohlberg, asked him how student/faculty meetings were "really" managed--since, theoretically, each student and faculty member has one vote.

According to our informant, Kohlberg said, "Remember, this is a small school with one or two hundred students. Before each general meeting, we have a teachers' meeting to discuss the aims and organization of the general meeting. Then, each teacher meets with his class to attempt to develop a concensus in the class. The general meeting occurs only after such 'preparatory' work."

The procedures described by Kohlberg for fostering faculty/student interaction might be beneficially applied in many schools. But it is a distortion of meaning to suggest they mimic a democratic process. We should, instead, call it a form of covert adult manipulation of the young. In this process, the students are allegedly given "choices." However, those choices are predetermined by the tacit and deliberate constraints the adults establish. There are important philosophical (and pedagogical) defects to this arrangement.

The adults are really responsible for the judgements of their charges, but do not frankly say, "We are managing the show, and what goes wrong is our fault." The students are told they can decide what they want, but must gradually

perceive that their choices are covertly inhibited by the acts of their de facto leaders--the teachers. In other words, the adults involved are not being really truthful--and this is a poor example for children. Finally (and this also becomes apparent through reading the evalutions) there is a recurrent tension between the abilities of the teachers to "guide" the students in appropriate directions, and the sporadic attempts of students, or groups of students, to move in undesirable directions (or to simply be apathetic, and refuse to act). In such instances, students may be prone to say, "You told us we can make our own decisions," and in reply the teachers must answer, "Yes, that is sort of what we said, but. . ." It is understandable why schools of this sort generate a high level of frustration--and eventually, cynicism--among teachers. That's part of the reason our era has invented the term "burn-out."

It is natural to see a parallel between these value-free approaches and the tenants of modern psychiatry. A psychiatrist typically does not act in a didactic manner, but largely listens, and only asks occasionally questions to help the patient better understand his own basic concerns. But, for many reasons, it may be wrong to try and extend this parallel ~~any further~~ for teacher/student relations. A psychiatric patient is typically an adult, and not a child. The psychiatrist's sole

concern is for the patient's mental health, while teachers are also responsible for causing students to acquire intellectual skills and information. The patient usually chooses his psychiatrist, and the psychiatrist can choose to refuse a patient. Often, the patient is expected to pay for his treatment. The assumption, in psychiatry, is that the patient is to some degree emotionally sick. And, by definition, if the patient chooses to pay money to see someone to help him, it is then objectively likely that he is in some fashion disturbed. Of course, as for students, we should probably proceed on the assumption that most of them are in good emotional health. The psychiatrist is usually responsible for only one patient during each session, and even in group therapy he is not trying to move the group towards a definable end. The teacher is always responsible for a group, and is expected to have the group attain a number of predetermined goals.

The preceding list of disjunctions between psychiatry and teaching suggests the basic flaw with a value-free approach. Psychiatry may be "value free," but a patient's actual time in treatment is only a minor part of his life. During most of his day, he interacts with others in environments that are highly value laden: in such environments, he should not steal, cheat, loaf or lie, and if he does and

is caught, he may well be punished. That is the nature of life out there. And he goes to the value free psychiatrist to learn how to live out there. But, for a student, school is life "out there." He is in school for long periods of time and surrounded by other human beings, and is engaged in a variety of endeavors which can affect them. He is not alone in a psychiatrist's office. And so, schools should not try to transform classrooms to be like psychiatrist's offices. If they do, the result will be a gross distortion of both such offices and the world out there.

Phillip Rieff, in his insightful work, The Triumph of the Therapeutic, contended that our society is tending to adopt such psychotherapeutic modes in many areas of personal relations. Obviously, my preceding discussion simply offers another instance demonstrating his point. Actually, it is not clear, from reading The Triumph, whether Rieff believes this tendency, on the whole, is good or bad. However, speaking as educators, we do not, in general, believe a shift of value having [illegible] psychotherapy is helpful for either students or teachers. The ~~method~~ shift has a seductive attraction. In the eyes of most teachers (and other educators) psychiatry is a high prestige profession. Thus, it is elevating to adopt its perspectives. And, in some ways, it may be less work to be a judicious listener than an engaged teacher. (It may especially seem fun to be

a judicious listener when one has not been trained for the job, and such listening appears to excuse one from the arduous work of teaching.) In any event, it is at least interesting to realize that this contemporary tendency to transform teaching--and many other authority relationships, too--towards the modes of psychotherapy has been noted by other observers.

These remarks are not to suggest that teaching excludes caring, affection or love. Indeed, we hold to the contrary. It is the psychiatrist that is, by his profession, supposed to be distant. His professional distance is a shield, to permit him to be dispassionate, and not to intervene, even when the patient is acting highly irrationally. But teachers, to some degree like parents, are expected to assert control and provide direction. And it is just this potential for assertion that permits them to deeply care. When teachers shift towards psychiatrists, I suspect they confuse students, who may ultimately be upset when those adults who are close to them do not act in a caring--and engaged--fashion.

The Supporters and Critics of Value Free Education

In considering the various values free approaches we have sketched, we should not ignore their relationship to a long educational tradition. For, just as moral educators

have predecessors in figures such as Jefferson and Mann, and many prominent other persons, values educators, too, have their predecessors. Their most prominent ancestor is undoubtedly the French philosopher Jean Jacque Rousseau. Rousseau, in his early and influential work, On the Origins of Inequality, proposed that man was naturally virtuous, but became bad as more complex societies and their institutions arose to corrupt him. Implicitly, his piece was a powerful critique of the French monarchy, and other contemporary modes of authoritarian government. In other words, it was government that made men "bad," and, to stimulate good, all we have to do was to diminish or eliminate governmental institutions.

Rousseau wrote extensively on educational matters. His engaging and imaginative presentations attracted a wide audience. And the parallels between Rousseau and modern values free approaches are obvious: if schools will just adopt minimalist roles, and largely leave students alone, things will work out for the best.

Of course, one cannot finally prove Rousseau "wrong." At some general level of theory, there is obvious merit to permitting students to find out some things on their own. The basic question is operational. How much adult intervention is needed, and how much finding out on their

own is appropriate? There's no definitive answer. However, it is instructive to realize that Rousseau spent the last years of his life suffering from paranoia and intermittent delirium, and that he handed over his own five illegitimate children to an orphanage. In Emile, his most famous work on education, Rousseau hypothesized that one adult would devote his full waking time to rearing his one student. Of course, Rousseau realized the book was only a fantasy--but fantasies can be deceptively appealing. An amusing story relating to Rousseau is about the efforts of Pestalozzi, an early nineteenth century educator, to apply Rousseau's laissez faire policies in rearing his own child. Pestalozzi found that he had to constantly run around ahead of the child, to make sure his exploratory efforts did not lead him to greviously harm himself or others. Finally, after several months, Pestalozzi, wrung out with exhaustion, abandoned his effort. Such stories remind one a little of the free school activities of a few years back. Somehow, it seems that every generation we have to remind ourselves that some things that sound charming are really bad ideas. Apparently it's hard to keep living in the world of common sense--but it's also dangerous to leave it.

Naturally, a number of people have been critical to approaches such as values education, or the cognitive-

developmental perspective. Hogan, a research psychologist, summarized the pros and cons of the quantitative research on these matters, and concluded the evidence was against the efficacy of such approaches.

The humnaists Bennett and Delattre contended that "values calrification and congitive moral development neglect and deny precious and im ortant features of morally mature life—friendship, love, fidelity, regard for work, care for home and family. . . hildren are invited to a world where it is a travesty and an imposition fo any one to tell them the truth."

Etzoni, a sociologist, remarked that "Dwelling exclusively on procedural matters, moral educators have taught the technique of debate without paying attention to what is being debated." As a result, he contends that the relativistic approach has stimulated student self-centeredness and self-seeking.

Peters, an English philosopher, contended that Kohlberg's definition of "justice," says only that justice is an agreement that there should be some principles. But, unless the principles are predetermined by some adult agreement, the process of moral education becomes a search, by a group of fifteen year olds, to find and live out the ultimate basis of human society. In other words, it's ridiculous.

Scheffler, another philosopher, criticized values education approaches because of their indifferences to the experiences and learnings of other human beings. He said,

> "...the moral point of view is attained, if at all, by acquiring a tradition of practice, embodied in rules and habits of conduct. Without a preliminary emersion in such tradition--an appreciation of the import of its rules, obligations, rights and demands--the concept of choice of action and rules for oneself can hardly be achieved. Yet the prevalent tradition of practice can be taught in such a way as to encourage the ultimate attainment of a superordinate and comprehensive point of view."

The First Steps In Our School District

As we said, our district determined to make a serious commitment towards educating students for moral conduct. And, by the term "conduct," we were thinking of virtuous acts, by students, as compared to encouraging students to generally evaluate the morality of everyone else--while they, the students, simply sat and talked. While we were contemplating this commitment, we faced another threshold question essentially raised by Scheffler's remarks. What program should support the stimulation of moral conduct in students? How can we transmit our "prevalent tradition"?

One of our first steps was the gradual development, through extensive discussions, of a statement of moral principles which should be communicated to students. As we proceeded with this development, we realized that we could not communicate vital principles to students unless we exemplified them in our own lives; as a result, after consultation with representatives our local NEA affiliate, the Board adopted a Code of Ethics for faculty in the District. Its provisions are broadcast not only to teachers, but also to students and parents. These provisions are as follows:

As a professional person, I will be an exemplar to our students. I will be satisfied with less than excellence in everything I do. It shall be my responsibility to:

Exemplify the highest moral character, behavior and leadership.

Respect the integrity and personality of the individual person.

Abide by the policies of the District in letter and in spirit.

Promote high standards of conduct and scholastic achievement among all students.

Respect the integrity and judgment of my colleagues.

I shall demonstrate my own commitments to: continue learning and to grow through professional improvement.

Encourage respect for learning and dedication to quality work.

Promote ethical relationships with all people.

Respect the values of education.

Exhibit fairness, modesty, and graciousness toward others.

In all that I do, I shall strive to develop worthy habits and to promote the qualities of leadership, initiative, good judgment and justice.

Perhaps our articulation of these principles represents a significant break from the psychotherapeutic perspective of values education. Theoretically, we do not really care about the morals of our psychiatrists--we ask about their technical competency. In effect, they are not supposed to be moral role models. And that makes their work harder, and easier. However, when teachers stop being

psychiatrists, and become leaders and shapers, their apparent moral conduct becomes vitally significant. Maybe the burdens of role modelling are one cause for the attraction of the therapeutic mode.

Once we had articulated moral principles, we realized that our school curriculum needed to be analyzed (and probably reshaped). These efforts would aim to insure that students, in their day-to-day academic work, were receiving facts to permit them to appreciate the principles we articulated, Furthermore, we had to try and design and encourage in-school activities which would assist the practice of moral conduct.

At this point, let me recap the four steps of our process: identifying what we stood for; communicating this in writing to faculty and students in language appropriate to their status; analyzing and reshaping the curriculum to facilitate moral learning; and planning appropriate in-school activities for students. As we can see, all of these steps compliment each-other.

One thing this whole process had demonstrated to us is that designing activities to improve our students' moral conduct is a challenge that will persist for our lifetimes. We have taken constructive steps. But we do not have any final answers, nor do we believe anyone else

has, either. Of course, another thing our efforts have taught us is the foolishness of previously asking some group of students to create their own thoroughgoing code of ethics from scratch. It has taken us five years to arrive at our current stage, and we know we still have more to do. Perhaps we could have tried to do it all in six months, but all we would have ended up with were vague generalities, and a large bundle of frustrating misunderstandings. We are sure that one reason it took us so long--and why the problem seems so "easy" to the young--is that we are old enough to have known from the beginning that the task would be difficult.

When it came to analyzing our curriculum, we understood that the relevant facts and concepts must be presented at a level appropriate to the ages and abilities of the students involved. Planning such presentations involved a pedagogical challenge. Still, we found that necessary adaptations can be made. The facts and concepts are derived from the traditional disciplines of the school--history, literature, the arts, and political science.

As one can see, our ultimate aim is not have a "program," but simply insure that education for moral conduct pervades our entire curriculum. Each of the disciplines listed transmits a unique part of human experience

which bears on moral behavior. The diffuseness of the fields and their complexity make it impossible to routinely extrapolate their subject matter into precise behavioral objectives and measureable outcomes. But, then, we are not teaching students "skills" in the traditional sense of the word. Morality is a way of life, a whole, which cannot be subdivided. And thus, the intellectual and emotional channels through which moral decisions are made must also reflect a whole. Otherwise, moral issues will be taken out of context, and converted into meaningless and artificial constructions, which no longer relate to the truth.

We must mention that there is one other assumption--or conclusion--that underlies a presentation to our students: the presentation accepts the premise that, on the whole, the creation and development of the United States has been beneficial to Americans in particular, and mankind in general. This is not to say the image of our present and past should be treated as a plaster saint. However, the premise of American virtue is generally applied because (a) it represents the beliefs of the overwhelming proportion of Americans, (b) it is ridiculous to rear children into an essentially adversery posture towards their homeland, where 98% of them will spend their adult lives, and (c) it is the belief of the persons administering the school district, and children are entitled to be confronted with the moral values of the democratically selected persons who govern their schools.

The existence of a "pro-American" curriculum does not denigrate the contributions of many cultures to our society. Nor does it deny that tensions have sometimes surrounded the process of acculturation. But an understanding of our pluralistic traditions should not hide the fact that most of our ancestors chose to come to America--they preferred it to their former homelands--and that almost all Americans are free to leave (and, in much of the world, citizens are kept as prisoners in their own countries). Under these circumstances, we are justified in lauding the traditions of a country where most of our ancestors chose to settle, and where all of us have chosen to stay.

Shaping Our Curriculum

In our previous remarks, we talked about school policies "complementing" moral conduct. This complimentarity suggests that rational learning must assist the practice of moral principles. The challenge to a moral education plan, therefore, consists of blending and balancing the cognitive with the practical. Such a program will insure that a moral community, which should be continuously emerging, does not arise in an intellectual vacuum. Thus, we differ with the policies which have led to the creation of educational moral communities based on intellectual superficiality--a form of reinventing the

wheel. Such communities are prone to substitute shallow half truths and slogans for profound knowledge

As to the practical mechanics of curriculum design, after prolonged discussions and planning, we invited large numbers of our teachers to participate in workshops to explain to them our goals for moral education. During the same period, we arranged to designate a special staff position to oversee the development of the moral conduct plan. (We understand the deficiencies of settling a broad-scale concern by hiring someone to "handle it," but felt that for the moment, such a bureaucratic step was a warranted first measure.) The teachers were then invited to develop lesson units appropriate for their age groups and subject areas, which helped to teach moral conduct. Many of these efforts were by individual teachers, and others were more wholistic, and aimed to provide an integrated plan for an entire school. During this whole process, we received significant and imaginative support from members of the lay community; a lot of people out there have time and good ideas which can be mobilized for activities which do not have too foreboding a pedagogical cast, such as moral conduct.

One of the schoolwide programs instituted in some schools draws on the concept of the Mayflower Compact,

executed by the Pilgrims just before their ship arrived in North America. The Compact, as you may recall, in simple but eloquent language, binds its signatories to create and maintain, in their new home, an authority system based on "just and equal laws for the general good," and to "promise all due submission and obedience" to the government established to enforce those laws. In some of the schools using the Compact as a vehicle, principals have used symbols such as a bell (harkening back to the Liberty Bell) and other devices to communicate to students their symbolic ties between the past and present, and emotionally enrich their activities. Other historic American documents--The Declaration of Independence, The Bill of Rights, the Gettysburgh Address--are also emphasized in many activities. Interested persons and institutions may order, for ten dollars, from the Salt Lake City School District, 440 E. First St. S., Salt Lake City, Utah 84111, a copy of a two hundred page report on our current activities.

Naturally, we have often been asked: what have evaluations shown about the effects of our program? Speaking frankly, at this point, the information is encouraging, but inconclusive. But we are pleased. The information is inconclusive because (a) the program has been operating on students for perhaps only two years, (b) as we are

involved in a "development," and expect that next year's efforts will be different than this year's, it is hard to know what data to compare to what, and (c) since we are a medium-sized district with limited resources, we lack the means to both finance program development and carry-out ambitious evaluation efforts.

Despite these qualifications, there are encouraging signs. Many staff members, at all levels, have stayed with our efforts for ~~three~~ two or ~~four~~ three years (without significant economic benefits), have found them rewarding and apparently are prepared to stay with such approaches for the rest of their careers. Education for moral practices, far from burning professionals out, seems to make work more pleasant. Another staff factor that we should mention is that the adoption of a code of faculty ~~morality~~ CONDUCT (after appropriate consultation) has tended to improve the level of faculty responsibility. Thus, teachers are entitled to a certain number of personal ~~business~~ LEAVE days each year--but they are only supposed to take them if they need them. FIVE YEARS AGO, ~~About year,~~ we simplified the form used by faculty members to justify ~~business day~~ PERSONAL absences; and, despite this "incentive" for irresponsibility, the number of ~~dominous~~ LEAVE days taken ~~off has gone down~~ HAS NOT INCREASED; we partially attribute this ~~heartening change~~ to the tone engendered by the faculty

morality statement--and the teachers' consciousness that they really are role models for their students. Finally, several of our schools more actively involved in the program have reported significant declines in their levels of vandalism.

One current area of frustration is our moral conduct activities in high schools. Many faculty members have been engaged, but we are dissatisfied with the level of pupil commitment. Some faculty have suggested that youths of this age are inherently antipathetic to community-oriented and groupish activities, and that they are necessarily highly individualistic. If this is correct, our goals are ill-conceived. Other faculty have pointed that many adolescents have affinities for wearing gang jackets, grouping together at rock concerts, and otherwise becoming engaged in dramatic collective activities. These faculty members argue that the segmented nature of many high school programs inhibit intimate youth/adult engagement, and make it harder for us to design vital collective activities that are appropriate to the broadening capabilities of the students. If this analysis is correct, we need to plan more carefully, and think of redesigning parts of our high school programs that handicap our goals, e.g., making efforts to create more cohesive subgroups of students and

teachers in such schools. We will keep working on this challenge.

Another suggested area for improvement is in stimulating more "pro-social" conduct by students. We have worked hard to increase student understanding and acceptance of discipline (and also of self-discipline); but we might improve further in increasing the helping responsibilities of students in the school community. These responsibilities might include tutoring, clean-up, fund raising and other service activities. In other words, morality not only includes avoiding the "bad," but also doing affirmative "good."

It would be nice if we had some clean and convincing evaluation report to produce. However, our emphasis, in the program, on basic American documents, has caused ~~me~~ us to think a little more carefully about the matter of evaluation. If we were transported back in time, how would we evaluate--two or three years after their execution--whether the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution "worked"? After all, we would not really have a control group--a collection of persons in an approximately similar situation, who are not subjected to the same independent variables, e.g., a group of American states that did not adopt the Declaration of Independence. Who knows, maybe those hypothetical non-adopters might have been better off

than the states that signed? Of course, we will never know, but we realize proposals for such evaluations are ridiculous. Most of us believe the Declaration and the Constitution were "successes," but we also know that political activities of such scope cannot be evaluated as if they were a new reading program for the third grade, or an alternative way of teaching long division. The circumstances that permitted the drafting and adoption of the Declaration or the Constitution simultaneously made it impossible to scientifically evaluate its outcomes (or at least via the means of evaluation commonly employed in education.) Similarly, the forces that have produced and carried forward our moral conduct program in Salt Lake City--the mobilization of widespread faculty and community support, the need to take vigorous measures against an unsatisfactory situation, the fact that we must continuously be reshaping the program as the result of day-to-day feedback--make it difficult for us to slow down or stop the machine for formal evaluation. Indeed, if the program could be managed as impersonally as if it were a "machine," its chances for success would surely be modest.

These implicit criticisms of contemporary evaluation are not intended to say the program is perfect, or that it should be immune from criticism. It can certainly benefit

from objective assessment. But our point is that the evaluation of programs such as ours must be founded, to a large part, on more qualitative and conceptual approaches than are typically applied in education research. Indeed, part of the reason American education may have drifted into its current disarray regarding ~~more~~ moral education, may be due to the relatively narrow criteria so common in evaluation nowadays..

Our experience in teaching moral conduct indicates that an approach based on the establishment of policies and educational practices has already made a significant contribution. We have been more effective in rearing moral persons than we were - but we have a long way to go.